Transformative Growth Grants Program
Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the Transformative Growth Grants Program?**
   The Transformative Growth Grants Program is open to businesses and nonprofit organizations located in Arlington, MA that have a vision for their future and are seeking financial support to make it happen. The program will provide funds to a variety of business and nonprofit organizations that were disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Eligible project proposals must fit into one of five broad categories. The program is federally funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and is subject to federal regulation. The application period will begin in May 2022, with grants being made in June 2022.

2. **Who is eligible for the Transformative Growth Grants Program?**
   Applicants must meet the following three criteria:
   1. Nonprofit organizations and businesses must represent a disproportionately impacted industry, defined as one of the following categories:

   - Restaurants and Food Service
   - Arts, Entertainment, and the Creative Economy
   - Tourism and Recreation
   - Personal Care and Beauty Salons

   - Wellness and Fitness
   - Childcare
   - Nonprofits serving populations disproportionately impacted by Covid-19
   - Small-Scale Retail

   2. Applicants must also be in good standing with the Town of Arlington, including being current on tax payments and having no current building or health code violations.

   3. Applicants must have been in operation in Arlington, MA since at least January 1, 2022.

   Applicants *may* also meet the following *optional* criteria:
   Applications may be submitted on behalf of collaborations and partnerships. If you represent a group of nonprofits or businesses applying for a grant together, you must identify <u>one</u> lead partner who will be responsible for submitting the application and managing the grant. Please note that all partners must be individually eligible.

   In addition, businesses and nonprofits in the following areas will receive a bonus point during the review process:
   - Low and Moderate-Income Census Block Groups (See [Eligible Block Groups Map](#))
   - Difficult Development Zones (All addresses with 02474 postal code)
   - Addresses zoned as a business district (See [Arlington Zoning Map](#)—Districts zoned B1–B5)

3. **Who is not eligible for the Transformative Growth Grants Program?**
   - Business franchises or franchisees.
   - Organizations that are not part of a disproportionately impacted industry (as defined in question 1).
   - Applicants that are not in good standing with the Town of Arlington, including being behind on tax payments or having current building or health code violations.
   - Applicants located outside of Arlington, Massachusetts.

4. **What types of requests are eligible?**
   Applicants must select <u>one</u> of the following categories:
   - **Placemaking:** Projects that cultivate inclusive and inspiring exterior spaces through public art, communal gathering areas, façade improvements, collaborating with local artists, or other endeavors. *Property owner approval required if applicant is a tenant. Home-based businesses and nonprofits are ineligible for this category.*

- **Programming:** Organizational growth through new or expanded programs or services.
- **Facilities and Infrastructure:** Renovations to buildings or spaces to address public health concerns (for example, installation of protective barriers or renovations that allow physical distancing), become more resilient to climate change (for example, weatherization, heat pump installation, native plantings, or composting), and/or support organizational expansion. *Property owner approval required if applicant is a tenant. Home-based businesses and nonprofits are ineligible for this category.*
- **Personnel:** Development of plans and programs to recruit and retain employees to develop the local workforce or development of strategies to help promote equitable access to work.
- **Planning:** Technical assistance, business counseling, marketing, or other services to assist with business planning, growth, or change-related needs.

5. **What types of requests are not eligible?**
   - Requests for working capital support (e.g. rent, mortgage, utilities, or payroll*) or to pay off existing debt
   - Requests to purchase property
   - Requests to support existing programs or services, including overhead and operating expenses
   - Requests for business travel
   - Requests for personal uses
   - Requests to reimburse the business or nonprofit for expenses that have already been accrued or paid
   - Requests for projects that conclude after 12/31/25.
     Payroll is an eligible request only for "Programming" project proposals that entail new or expanded services.

6. **What do I need to do to apply? What documents do I need to provide?**
   The Transformative Growth Grants Program has a two-part application process.

   During the **Preliminary Application Period (May 10 – June 7)**, the preliminary application form will be available online and preliminary applications may be submitted. The online application will require submission of nonprofit/business contact information, a project proposal, a budget, narrative responses that give applicants the opportunity to explain their proposed project in depth, and your most recent tax returns. The preliminary application is expected to take approximately 1 hour to complete. In mid-June, following assessment by the Review Committee, selected applicants will be invited to move forward to the second phase of the application process.

   During the **Finalist Interview Phase (June 13-17)**, finalists will be invited to a 30-minute interview with the Review Committee (in person or by Zoom, to be determined). This is an opportunity for the Review Committee to ask questions and for Finalists to share the importance of the proposed project to the business or organization and to share additional information that was not included in the preliminary application. At this time, Finalists are also invited to provide any other expository documentation relevant to the project that may be helpful for the Review Committee to better understand the project, its feasibility, and the applicant(s)'s need. This may include such documentation as sketches, quotes, or materials relevant to the project.

   Grant Award Notices (**by June 30**): Grant award notices will be sent to all finalists selected to receive a grant. Please note that additional documentation will be required at this time, including a Form W-9; a Unique Entity Identifier; and a copy of Business Certificate/License/501(c)3 letter/Form990. Some applicants may be asked to provide additional documentation based upon their proposal. Applicants will never be asked about citizenship status or for any immigration documentation.

7. **How do I submit an application?**
   Submitting an online preliminary application is preferred. Submit your online application by June 7th at www.surveymonkey.com/r/ARPATGG. Paper applications will also be available at Town Hall during regular business hours. You may only submit an application online or by hardcopy. Duplicate applications are subject to disqualification.

8. **What should I do if I have questions about the program?**
   Prospective applicants are invited to schedule an appointment during office hours, designated times when applicants can sign up for individual Zoom meetings or phone calls to discuss questions and projects with Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) staff. Prospective applicants may also email questions to covidrelief@town.arlington.ma.us. Please note, DPCD staff may recommend setting up an office hour session. If you need assistance completing the preliminary application or accessing any related documents because of a disability,

lack of internet access, a language barrier, or another question, please contact the Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development at 781-316-3090.

9. **What do I do if I cannot fill out the application online because of a disability, lack of Internet access, a language barrier, or some other reason?**
   If you need assistance completing the application, you may contact 781-316-3090 or covidrelief@town.arlington.ma.us. Please include your name, address, and phone number. If you do not speak English, please indicate the language you speak, and we will make accommodations to provide translation and/or interpretation services. The need for assistance will not impact your ability to participate in the program or limit your eligibility for funding.

10. **Can unincorporated groups apply for a grant?**
    No. In order to receive federal funds, an applicant must be incorporated. If you are an individual or an unincorporated association or group, we recommend identifying a partner business or nonprofit who may be interested in partnering with you to submit an application. If you are a member of a group of organizations or businesses, please identify one lead partner who will be responsible for managing the grant.

11. **I rent the space my business/nonprofit occupies. Am I still eligible for facilities funding?**
    Yes. All Finalists planning to make physical changes to the structure will be required to include a letter from their landlord approving the proposed changes.

12. **My business or nonprofit is run out of my home. Can I apply for a grant?**
    Home-based businesses and nonprofits are eligible to apply for the Transformative Growth Grant Program. Please note that home-based businesses and nonprofits are NOT eligible to apply for requests in the Facilities & Infrastructure or Placemaking categories.

13. **How will the applications be evaluated?**
    A Review Committee will be made up of individuals from the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Town Manager's Office. Following the close of the application period, the Review Committee will evaluate the applications and score them based on the criteria in the rubric (See Attachment A).

    Top scoring preliminary applications will be recommended for movement to the Finalist Interview Phase, which will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
    - **Interview:** Applicant gives compelling responses that clearly outline the purpose of the project and that evidence the capability of the applicant to carry out the project as described.
    - **Research/Feasibility:** The applicant has conducted adequate research to determine costs and an appropriate timeline; if applicable, the applicant has gotten approval from their landlord or board of directors to carry out the project.

14. **Will all applicants receive grants?**
    It is unlikely that all applicants will receive grants. This is a competitive grant program and submission of an application is not a guarantee of funding. We anticipate that 20 nonprofits and businesses will receive funding. The Town reserves the right to award grantees funding in a greater amount or a lesser amount than requested based on the information presented in the applications.

15. **What type of assistance will I receive? Do I need to pay it back?**
    The assistance is a grant. You will not need to pay back or return grant funds unless there are any violations of the grant agreement.

16. **How much grant funding is available?**
    The Transformative Growth Grant Program will provide up to $860,900 to eligible organizations. Requests for grants of any amount will be considered. The Town anticipates funding up to twenty nonprofits and businesses. There is no preference for larger or smaller projects.

17. **Are there any reporting requirements?**
    Yes, grant recipients will be required to provide quarterly reports (March 31st, June 30th, September 31st, and

December 31st), beginning in fall 2022, for the duration of the expenditure period. Templates for quarterly reports will be made available. The Town may monitor and conduct additional evaluation activity, including a review of quantitative or qualitative data needed to understand the impact of the grants.

18. **Are projects subject to Town policies?**

    Yes, projects are subject to all Town bylaws, policies, and guidelines. Organizations selected to receive grants are subject to all local, state, and federal regulations.

19. **Will anyone know that I received this grant?**

    If your business or nonprofit is awarded a grant, please be advised that the applicant's name(s), project as described in their application, and grant award amount may be used for publicity purposes (not including any sensitive individual or financial information) and media. The U.S. Treasury may also be made aware of your grant.

20. **What is the source of funding for the Transformative Growth Grants Program?**

    The Transformative Growth Grants Program is part of the Town of Arlington's ARPA framework, which was endorsed by the Arlington Select Board in October 2021. ARPA is intended to address the negative health and economic impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Arlington expects to receive a total of $35.25 million in funds. More information about the ARPA framework can be found at www.arlingtonma.gov/ARPA. Organizations selected to receive grants are subject to all local, state, and federal regulations.

Preliminary Application Rubric—Evaluation Criteria (Maximum score: 33 points)		
Eligibility	The applicant represents a disproportionately impacted industry AND is located in Arlington, MA AND has been in business since at least 1/1/22 (*Eligible*)	The applicant does not represent a disproportionately impacted industry and/or is not in Arlington, MA and/or opened after 1/1/22 (*Ineligible*)	
Proposal	The applicant has provided a clearly developed proposal that includes useful details (5 points)	The applicant has provided a proposal that is somewhat developed but lacks details (3 points)	The applicant has provided an underdeveloped proposal that does not allow for review (0 points)
Business/ Nonprofit Fiscal Health	Business/Nonprofit has demonstrated through revenues and plans that they are in good standing and that the project is a sound investment (3 pts)	Business/Nonprofit has demonstrated through revenues and plans that they are somewhat viable and that the investment is likely sound (1 pt)	Business/Nonprofit has not demonstrated viability and the investment is likely risky (0 points)
Covid-19 Impact	Applicant has clearly explained the impact of Covid-19 upon their operations (3 pts)	Applicant has provided some explanation of the impact of Covid-19 upon operations, but there is lack of clarity (1 pt)	Applicant has not provided sufficient explanation regarding the impact of Covid-19 upon their operations (0 pts)
COVID-19 Recovery Plan	Applicant has provided a clear overview of their plan, including how it addresses the Covid-19 impacts AND has outlined efforts to mitigate Covid-19 harms to date (3 pts)	Applicant has provided some explanation of their recovery plan, but does not address the specific Covid-19 impacts or lacks clarity (1 pt)	Applicant's recovery plan is unclear or lacks detail (0 pts)
Capacity	Applicant has evidenced the capacity to take on the project, either through using current staff or hiring new staff or consultants, and sufficient resources (3 pts)	Applicant has provided some evidence, but it is either unclear whether there is sufficient capacity to accomplish this project or the applicant has indicated concern over capacity (1 pt)	The applicant or application has indicated that there is insufficient capacity to accomplish this project successfully (0 pts)
Inclusivity and Equity	The applicant has clearly explained how this project will promote inclusivity and equity in Arlington (3 pts)	The applicant has provided some explanation, but positive impacts on inclusivity and equity are minimal or unclear (1 pt)	The project does not promote inclusivity and equity in Arlington or the applicant has not provided a basis to indicate that the project will promote inclusivity and equity (0 pts)
Resiliency	The project clearly aims to enhance public health outcomes, address climate change concerns, or improve business/nonprofit ability to respond to adverse impacts (3 pts)	The project loosely aims to enhance public health outcomes, address climate change concerns, or improve business/nonprofit ability to respond to adverse impacts, but the application lacks clarity (1 pt)	The project does not enhance public health outcomes, address climate change concerns, or improve business/nonprofit ability to respond to adverse impacts (0 pts)
Local Economy	The applicant has clearly explained and evidenced how the project will support the local economy (3 pts)	The applicant has provided only some, or an unclear explanation of how the project will support the local economy (1 pt)	The project does not support the local economy (0 points)
Budget	A detailed budget that considers all elements of the proposed project has been provided (3 pts)	A budget has been provided, but it lacks detail and/or does not consider every cost of the proposed project (1 pt)	An incomplete, unclear, or impractical budget has been provided (0 pts)
Timeline	The applicant has provided a timeline that begins the project by 8/31/22 and concludes the project by 12/31/23 (3 pts)	The applicant has provided a timeline that begins the project by 5/31/23 and concludes the project by 12/31/25 (1 pt)	The applicant has provided a timeline that is unclear or that does not conclude the project by 12/31/25 (0 pts)
Bonus Points	Applicant is located in a Low- and Moderate-Income Census Block, Difficult Development Zone, or a Business-Zoned District (1 pt)	Applicant is not located in a Low- and Moderate-Income Census Block, Difficult Development Zone, or a Business-Zoned District. (0 points)	